



# Connections

November 2008

## Rodeo Prepares MoDOT for Old Man Winter

### Gary Jones Wins Statewide Winter Skills Competition

by Kristi Jamison / photos by Cathy Morrison

What does a Boy Scout or Girl Scout and a MoDOT Maintenance worker have in common? They're always prepared, of course.

The training of either a Boy Scout or Girl Scout is deeply founded in the movement's motto, "Be Prepared." It means that one is always in a state of readiness for duty: being prepared in your mind by having thought out beforehand any situation that may occur; and being prepared in body to make yourself strong and active in order to perform your duty.

Well, you could say the same adage is behind MoDOT's annual Winter Skills Rodeo. The competition, which is required for all MoDOT employees who operate equipment during winter storms, tests both the mental and physical skills required to operate a snowplow truck and a loader.

The Rodeo is a two-part competition. First, Maintenance employees participated in training exercises in their respective districts. Then, the two top scorers in each district were invited to compete at the statewide level in Sedalia on Oct. 15.

Operators at both levels had to complete a written exam, a pre-trip vehicle inspection and a hands-on driving skills course. They had to back into narrow spaces for loading, plow in a straight line and through obstacles, clear curbs and interchanges and meet other challenges.

Senior Maintenance Worker Gary Jones from the Warsaw Maintenance facility in District 5 took top honors as MoDOT's best winter equipment operator this year. Dennis Roethemeier, regional maintenance supervisor at the Sarcoxie Maintenance facility in District 7, placed second. In third place was Randall Ipock from the Winona Maintenance facility in District 9. District 7 took home the traveling trophy after its two competitors racked up the best combined scores among the districts.

"I am proud of all employees that participated in the Rodeo," said Mike Shea. "Because of this training, I know they are well prepared to meet the challenges of the upcoming winter season. When snow and ice fall, they will be out there fighting hard to make sure the traveling public and our



Amanda Howe climbs into a truck to show off her skills on the driving course. She is the first woman to compete in the statewide Rodeo.

own workers make it safely back to their families, even in the worst circumstances."

This year, Amanda Howe from the Nashua Maintenance facility in District 4, competed in Sedalia, becoming the first woman to

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## Projects Will Improve Rail Service

by Kristi Jamison

Things are on the right track for passenger rail service in Missouri. With an increasing demand to move freight by rail, as well as a clear need to increase transportation options for travelers; it was evident that something had to be done to increase rail capacity in Missouri.

During the 2008 legislative session, MoDOT worked with the state legislature to secure \$5 million in funding needed as a match to a first-ever federal grant specifically for intercity passenger rail service improvements. Later, the Railroad Division made application for the new grant. Then on Sept. 2, MoDOT signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Union Pacific Railroad, contingent on receiving the federal grant, to bring two new rail siding projects to reality. The agreement signified the first important step toward increasing capacity on the rail line between Kansas City and St. Louis.

The agreement states that Union Pacific will immediately begin designing a siding near the city of California, and it will complete the design for an extension of an existing siding on the same rail line at Knob Noster. A siding is an extra track that runs parallel to a main rail line where trains

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## We Salute the Brave MoDOT Employees Who Have Served Our Country



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# They Came, They Rode, They Conquered

by Kristi Jamison

Cycling’s best came out and conquered the Midwest in the 2008 Tour of Missouri. Christian VandeVelde of Team Garmin-Chipotle won the seven-stage race, which progressed its way through seven MoDOT districts.

MoDOT staff played an instrumental role in identifying the final race route, developing traffic management plans, and driving and logging information about the route. MoDOT also made sure the public was well informed

about traffic interruptions along state highways during the race, and in some cases, the department even went the extra mile to help keep racing cyclists safe from nearby traffic.

This year, there were an estimated 434,000 spectators, up from 367,566 spectators in 2007. While the race gives MoDOT a great opportunity to show off Missouri’s transportation system, it also brings in tourism dollars to support Missouri’s economy. The first Tour of Missouri was touted as having a \$26.2 million statewide economic impact. While the figures aren’t in yet for this year’s race, one thing is for sure, the race made a big impact on the cycling industry.

In just two short years, the Tour of Missouri has now been elevated to a 2HC ranking, the highest ranking it can get in the United States. That should draw even more interest next year, as this rating means that winners can now earn premium international competition points.

**The infamous wall of MoDOT trucks once again protected Tour of Missouri racers as they completed individual time trials on an 18-mile route around Branson.**



Shaun Schnitz

## Climbing the MoDOT Ladder

by Sally Oxenhandler

We probably all like to think we have what it takes to move ahead in our jobs. But, do we? In fact, do we even know where to start?

A lot goes into interviewing and hiring job candidates. A supervisor must determine what job tasks, skills and preferred employee qualities are most important for the position. Applicants are then selected for interviews based on education, experience and personal qualities relative to the position. The next step - the hiring process - is designed to evaluate applicants on their ability to do the job.

There are two ways you can help position yourself to move up the career ladder. First, be familiar with our hiring policies and practices and make sure you’re in sync with them. Second, prepare yourself personally for advancement.

Let’s tackle the process first. Here’s a checklist for what you should know and do to move ahead:

- Check out job announcements on the intranet, [www.i](#), or subscribe to get job opportunities e-mailed to you.
- When applying for a job, fill out the internal opportunity application by the due date. It should be neat, accurate and professional. Include all the information you want considered about your job knowledge, skills, abilities, education and internal and external experience.

While not required, include a cover letter and resume’ along with the internal opportunity application.

- Review the list of preferred employee qualities.

If you get an interview:

- Learn all you can about the job.
- Anticipate the skills, working conditions and most significant organizational values.
- Practice answering questions.
- Dress for success.
- Make a good first impression.
- Give complete and thorough answers.
- Stay positive.
- Ask questions.

- Close the interview on a positive note.
- Send a thank you note.

“Promotions aren’t just given to the person who has been with MoDOT the longest,” says Human Resources Director Micki Knudsen. “Only employees who are ready for the next level can expect to get there.”

Amy Binkley, who was recently promoted to the position of Resource Management Specialist in Central Office, believes there are three qualities that can help you move up: initiative, dedication and hard work.

“Asking to be involved in new projects and then carrying them out with little

supervision is an added advantage that may make the difference when you’re being considered for a promotion,” said Binkley. “Working independently to manage projects and asking questions to identify process improvements show you’re motivated, dedicated and eager to produce results.”

Still questions surface about the hiring process. How do supervisors determine who to interview? Why do people who have less seniority than others get selected for a position? You can find the answers to these questions and a lot of other good information on the intranet under Human Resources or by visiting with your Human Resources staff.

**A three-member panel interviews an internal candidate. They will ask several questions to help determine if she has the right work and personal skills to fit the job they are trying to fill.**



Shaun Schnitz



# Hundreds Participate in I-70 Online Public Meeting

On a project that stretches for 200 miles and has both urban and rural components, how do you choose a location for a public meeting?

That’s the dilemma MoDOT officials faced this summer as plans were made for a mid-project update on the environmental study that is evaluating the inclusion of truck-only lanes to any future reconstruction and expansion of Interstate 70 across Missouri.

“In our previous studies of I-70, which lasted nearly six years, we were able to move our meetings around,” Project Manager Bob Brendel said. “At one time or another, we had been in nearly every community along I-70. But this study was only scheduled for 12 months, with three rounds of meetings. Plus, our spring meetings had been lightly attended. We needed to try something different.”

So, building off the experience of having had 7,500 people watch a YouTube video about how truck-only lanes might

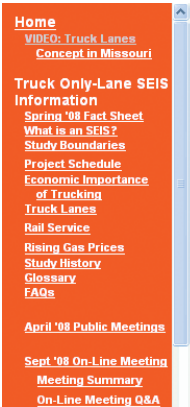
work, MoDOT and its consultant, HNTB, decided to try an online public meeting. The displays that normally sit on easels at a public meeting were made into interactive PDFs that were available for a month on the study Web site – [www.improvei70.org](http://www.improvei70.org).

When the online meeting came to a close in late September, more than 525 participants had downloaded the public meeting, and 87 had completed an accompanying electronic survey.

“It’s often a challenge to get people to attend a public meeting,” Brendel said, “especially on a project that has so many uncertainties. And with higher gasoline prices, it’s hard to expect people to drive a long distance to attend a meeting.

“We thought this was worth trying; giving people the opportunity to view the displays at whatever time was most convenient for them.”

To ensure a two-way dialogue, visitors to the online meeting were provided



**I-70 is the most important transportation corridor in Missouri,** connecting the state's two largest cities and carrying more rural daily traffic than any other route. The interstate has been an engine for nearly 50 years of economic growth and prosperity.

But today, many portions of the facility are strained beyond capacity, increasing delays and dampening economic activity. Deteriorating pavement and poorly functioning interchanges compound the problem and make travel on I-70 a daunting experience. And the problems are not exclusive to the metropolitan areas. By the year 2030, all segments of I-70 are expected to operate at unacceptable levels of service – meaning unstable traffic flow, stop-and-go conditions and traffic



**The [improvei70.org](http://improvei70.org) Web site is packed with information about the project including video of the concept, supplemental environmental impact statement details, completed studies, issues and more.**

with an opportunity to e-mail questions at any point. Answers were posted to a “Q&A” page periodically throughout the month-long meeting. To supplement the online meeting, MoDOT also conducted three in-person “listening stations” at a truck stop in Oak Grove and at public libraries in Columbia and O’Fallon.

“We received a lot of valuable input,” Brendel said. “More than 95 percent of

the people who completed the survey said the displays had made a good case for why I-70 needs to be reconstructed, and 73 percent were in favor of the truck-only lanes concept.”

A complete summary of the online meeting can be found at the Improve I-70 Web site.

## Bi-State Agreement Drops CDL Requirements for Some Farmers

by DeAnne Rickabaugh

The Missouri and Iowa departments of Transportation have inked an agreement that gives farmers who use large trucks to haul property across the state line the limited ability to do so without meeting commercial drivers license requirements.

Normally, the CDL exemption granted to drivers of vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 lbs. or more is limited to the farmer’s home state, unless adjoining states agree to extend the privilege to each other’s citizens. Because of the bi-state agreement, operators of farm vehicles licensed in either Missouri or Iowa are now exempt from the CDL requirement if the farm vehicle:

- Is used exclusively to transport agricultural products, farm machinery and/or farm supplies to or from their farm.
- Is used within 150 air miles of the farmer’s farm.
- Is properly operated as a farm vehicle under the laws of either state.
- Is controlled and operated by a farmer, the farmer’s employees or

farmer’s family members, so long as the operator holds a valid drivers license in either state.

- Is not operated under hire, meaning the farmer does not haul someone else’s property in return for payment, trade or other reimbursement.

Only the farmer’s own property can be transported under the reciprocity agreement.

“This is very good news,” said Jan Skouby, MoDOT Motor Carrier Services Director. “Farmers are often ticketed because they assume the exemptions from safety regulations given to farmers by their own state extend into neighboring states. That is NOT the case... unless the states enact a reciprocal agreement like this one.”

This is the second reciprocal agreement between Iowa and Missouri. In 2007, the states agreed to allow farmers who haul only their own products and equipment within 30 miles of the states’ border an exemption from interstate fuel tax reporting.

## Rail Projects

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can pass each other without stopping. Construction on the new California siding will begin by March 31, 2009.

By the end of September, MoDOT was indeed awarded the \$3.3 million competitive grant from the Federal Railroad Administration.

“With high fuel prices and tightening economic conditions, travelers want

Now with federal and state funds in place, the siding projects will soon help increase freight mobility and reduce delays for Amtrak service on the UP line which crosses the state. The timing couldn’t be better since recent statistics show that Amtrak ridership is finally on the rise again, up 31 percent in Missouri since last October.



Cathy Morrison

additional, dependable transportation options,” said MoDOT Director Pete Rahn. “This federal grant, in addition to funding we received for multimodal operations from the Missouri legislature in May, is just the boost we need to develop a transportation system that better serves everyone’s needs – not just drivers.”

The multimodal package approved by the General Assembly in May significantly increased the department’s non-highway state-funded budget to \$39.3 million for 2009 – a 74 percent increase from last year’s \$22.6 million. Beyond the rail improvements, MoDOT will also invest these funds in water port, airport and transit improvements.



Cathy Morrison



Performance-Based Pay Program  
Successfully Implemented

by Mike Holloway

MoDOT has successfully added the Performance-Based Pay Program to its total rewards program. Performance-based pay recognizes individual performance and achievement with temporary annual salary increases and joins the department’s other total rewards programs, including the Equity Increase Program, Career Ladder Promotion Program, Performance Plus Programs, Solutions at Work, Employee Recognition Program, Service and Safety Awards Programs and the various Challenge Programs (Chip Seal, Tool & Equipment, Practical Design).

Inaugural result of the new program are:

- There were 1,093 recipients state wide, representing 16 percent of authorized FTEs.
- \$1,448,628 was spent out of \$1.7 million allocated to the program.
- 80 percent of recipients were in salary grade 16 and below.
- 69 percent of recipients were non-supervisors.
- 59 percent of recipients were field

employees (70 percent in the districts).

- 85 percent of recipients were below the midpoint step for their salary grade (step 10).
- 81 percent of recipients were at the top of their current career ladder.

Information about the process, its purpose, eligibility criteria, factors to consider in determining who is to receive a temporary increase and other information is available at: <http://wwwi/intranet/hr/documents/Performance-BasedPayProgramDetail.pdf>.

District engineers and division leaders had discretion in structuring the recipient selection process. For a flowchart summarizing the suggested steps and prioritization factors, go to: <http://wwwi/intranet/hr/documents/DecisionProcessFlowchart.pdf>.

If you have any questions about this program, contact Mike Holloway at (573) 751-2339.

For Your Benefit

Keep more of each of your paychecks by reducing your taxes through the Missouri Cafeteria Plan. You can save 25 percent or more on qualified expenses through the plan, which allows you to set aside tax-free money to pay for qualified expenses such as state-sponsored health, dental and vision insurance premiums; qualified payroll-deducted voluntary insurance products; health-care expenses; and/or dependent care.

The deadline for enrolling in the 2009 Cafeteria Plan is Dec. 1 or online until Dec. 15. Don’t miss the savings! An enrollment guide and instructions have already been mailed to you from the Missouri Consolidated Healthcare Plan. To learn more about the Cafeteria Plan, go to [www.mocafe.com](http://www.mocafe.com) or call 1-800-659-3035.

Employees Benefit from Reducing Injuries

by Kristi Jamison



MoDOT saved more than a half-million dollars from January to June by reducing work-related injuries and workers’ compensation costs. The department paid out nearly \$187,000 in incentives to hundreds of employees through the Performance Plus Injury Reduction Incentive. Here are the results:

- 44 workgroups met the target by reducing the number of OSHA recordable incidents by 60 percent over

the previous period last year.

- Districts 1, 2, 7 and 8 and Central Office met the goal of reducing the dollar amount of workers’ comp claims by 25 percent over the previous period last year.
- 1,180 employees will be receiving the payout, totaling \$186,995.
- Total savings were \$569,575. After incentives were paid out, our net savings were \$382,580.

Stay Safe Over the Holidays

by Laura Holloway

Holiday gatherings will begin soon with the Thanksgiving turkey and continue through December. The Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety wants to make sure you’re around to enjoy your time with family and friends by driving sober throughout the season.

In 2007 there were 7,780 alcohol-related traffic crashes killing 243 people and injuring 4,889 people. Someone was

killed or injured in an alcohol-related traffic crash every 1.7 hours.

Is it worth the risk? Violators often face jail time, the loss of their driver license, higher insurance rates and dozens of other expenses from attorney fees, other fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, lost time at work, etc. If you cause a fatal crash while intoxicated, you can be charged with

involuntary manslaughter, a felony resulting in up to seven years of jail time, a \$5,000 fine or both.

We are all part of the solution. Please consider the following tips:

- Don’t risk it – if you plan to drive, don’t drink.
- Encourage safe driving behaviors among family, friends and co-workers.
- Choose a designated driver before partying. A designated driver is someone who drinks NO alcohol at all.

- Take mass transit, a taxicab or ask a friend to drive you home.
- Party hosts should include alcohol-free beverages.
- Spend the night where the activity is being held.
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- Always wear your safety belt – it’s your best defense against an impaired driver.

Arrive Alive! For more information, visit [www.saveMOLives.com](http://www.saveMOLives.com)

November Service Anniversaries

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| <b>50 Years</b>     |     |
| Millard F. Knott    | D9  |
| <b>35 Years</b>     |     |
| Donnie Kinsler      | D3  |
| Ronald F. Freese    | D3  |
| Randall L. Owens    | D8  |
| Lawrence J. Schumer | D10 |
| <b>30 Years</b>     |     |
| Lynn A. Parks       | D3  |
| Norman G. Rose      | D3  |
| Gregory L. Morgan   | D4  |
| Perry R. Hannon     | D4  |
| Dean C. Whitfield   | D5  |
| Michael K. O’Malley | D5  |
| Douglas L. Hillis   | D6  |
| Everett E. Delozier | D7  |
| Gary F. Vaeth       | D10 |
| Norman R. Cole      | D10 |

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| <b>25 Years</b>    |    |
| Henry F. Berry     | D1 |
| Kevin R. Skinner   | D3 |
| Billy J. Glazier   | D4 |
| Darren L. Barker   | D4 |
| Leon J. Maasen     | D5 |
| Robert A. Maggio   | D6 |
| Randy N. Easter    | D6 |
| James E. Peake     | D6 |
| Dale E. Deweese    | D6 |
| Sammy J. Lee       | D8 |
| <b>20 Years</b>    |    |
| Linda J. Darden    | D6 |
| Stacy A. Armstrong | CO |

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| <b>15 Years</b>         |     |
| Nickie D. Abplanalp     | D1  |
| Mark W. Long            | D5  |
| David O. Leicher        | D5  |
| Rocky L. Campbell       | D5  |
| Melissa A. Hubbs        | D6  |
| Joseph D. Horned        | D8  |
| Lovell S. Noblitt       | D8  |
| William S. Gettys       | D9  |
| William D. Ledgerwood   | D9  |
| Stephen J. Smith        | D9  |
| Joe D. Lemmon           | D10 |
| Samuel J. Niederhelm    | CO  |
| Matthew L. Burcham      | CO  |
| Brenda Treadwell-Martin | CO  |
| Sheila R. Barnett       | CO  |
| Stacy R. Heckert        | CO  |
| Randall S. Hoskins      | CO  |

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| <b>10 Years</b>       |     |
| Nicholas T. Middleton | D2  |
| Curtis D. Schenk      | D3  |
| Brian K. Winters      | D4  |
| Marc B. Garrett       | D4  |
| Fredrick J. Wilde     | D5  |
| Kristin E. Gerber     | D5  |
| Carolyn D. Lewis      | D6  |
| Craig S. Leake        | D7  |
| Ronald D. Girth       | D8  |
| Nathan B. Reed        | D9  |
| Brad L. Bansberg      | D9  |
| Christopher R. Medley | D9  |
| Cindy L. Dzurick      | D9  |
| Brenda K. Golden      | D9  |
| Charles D. Logsdon    | D10 |

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Cleon D. Lewis       | D10 |
| Todd L. Walters      | CO  |
| Albert C. Frasher    | CO  |
| Donna J. Hoeller     | CO  |
| <b>5 Years</b>       |     |
| Jon D. Angus         | D1  |
| Laverne R. Ward      | D1  |
| Leonard E. Lowe      | D2  |
| Matthew S. Findley   | D4  |
| Eric A. Oakes        | D4  |
| Bradley S. Wehmeyer  | D5  |
| Joshua C. Marriott   | D5  |
| Ralph L. Brooks      | D6  |
| Michael F. Schneider | D6  |

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Danny L. Duke        | D6  |
| Joshua L. Bronson    | D7  |
| Michael E. Burchell  | D7  |
| Darrell G. Slatten   | D8  |
| Timmy W. Brenner     | D8  |
| Steven E. Bradford   | D9  |
| Thomas J. Bishop     | D9  |
| Beth Ann Woody       | D9  |
| Thomas G. Obermann   | D10 |
| Julie L. Prather     | CO  |
| Elixabeth A. Reed    | CO  |
| Richard W. Schomaker | CO  |
| Mark A. Sidebottom   | CO  |
| Claire A. Wilhoit    | CO  |

In Memoriam

|                         |    |          |  |
|-------------------------|----|----------|--|
| <b>Active Employee</b>  |    |          |  |
| Larry W. Nichols        | D3 | Sept. 11 |  |
| <b>Retirees</b>         |    |          |  |
| Clarence A. Westendorff | D4 | July 17  |  |
| Albert B. Snowden       | D8 | Aug. 8   |  |
| Donald L. Sturdivant    | D9 | Sept. 1  |  |
| Charles N. Garr         | D1 | Sept. 1  |  |

|                          |    |          |
|--------------------------|----|----------|
| Wayne W. Vaughn          | D1 | Sept. 2  |
| Edward P. Allen          | D6 | Sept. 3  |
| Ralph E. Johnson         | D7 | Sept. 11 |
| Orville A. Wetzel        | D6 | Sept. 11 |
| Paul H. Johnson          | CO | Sept. 14 |
| Alfred “Red” W. Thompson | D5 | Sept. 27 |
| Donald L. Valleroy       | D6 | Sept. 27 |

September Retirements

| Name             | Location | Years of Service |
|------------------|----------|------------------|
| James White      | D10      | 35               |
| Gary Dryden      | D1       | 26               |
| James Beason     | D4       | 10               |
| Stephen Saale    | D4       | 31               |
| Mary Ellebracht  | D5       | 23               |
| A. Lee Cortelyou | D6       | 8                |

|              |    |    |
|--------------|----|----|
| Larry Dudley | D6 | 25 |
| Neil Wagner  | D7 | 5  |
| Larry Scobee | D8 | 31 |
| Donald Ross  | D9 | 24 |
| John Wilson  | CO | 34 |





# It's Been a Good Ride

## Shuttle Celebrates 15 Years of Service

by Kristi Jamison and Randy Kelley

Being that MoDOT is a transportation agency, it is fitting that we are the only state agency that provides a shuttle service for employees. It's a nice perk to have considering that employees often have to travel between one of many Central Office or District 5 facilities in Jefferson City to attend a meeting or work group. But just how did the shuttle service come to be?

**Then**

The shuttle service was originally implemented in June 1993. Prior to that, the Motor Pool did offer a "Driver Service Shuttle" to pick up an employee from his or her home and bring them to the Motor Pool to check out a pool car. Then, when they returned the pool car, a driver would shuttle them back home. To provide that type of service, the garage had extended hours on Thursday and Friday evenings until 7:30 p.m.

In order to better align the Motor Pool's hours with MoDOT's regular business hours, then General Service Director Clay Wester approved the shuttle service as we know it today and discontinued the service of picking up and dropping off pool car drivers at their homes.

When the shuttle service started 15 years ago, there was only one mini van in service. As time went on, demand for the service grew and MoDOT began to expand into various locations around the Jefferson City area, so a second and third mini van were eventually added.

In its formidable years, the shuttle service was virtually a portal to the MoDOT career ladder. Many people were first hired as service attendants, but their skills and education eventually enabled them to move on to other opportunities at MoDOT. Now several former Motor Pool service attendants have



From left to right: Larry Redel, Bill Reinkemeyer, Steve Dickneite, Norb Dickneite, Bob Mahlan and Dick Jones

successful careers in many other areas within the department (see sidebar).

**Now**

Today the Motor Pool Operation is open from 6 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Since MoDOT has consolidated similar work groups into central locations in the past several years, demand for shuttle services has decreased somewhat. As a result, there are now just two shuttles in operation again.

Shuttle 1 is a scheduled shuttle, transporting partners to and from the Garage Annex and the Central Office. Shuttle 2 is an "on call" shuttle van that will transport and deliver partners all over the Jefferson City area. Shuttle 1 assists Shuttle 2 when necessary to meet partners' needs.

Shuttles are now primarily operated by retirees who want to work in a part-time capacity. There are currently four drivers: Bob Mahlan, Dick Jones, Bill Reinkemeyer and Larry Redel. Steve Dickneite dispatches the shuttle and makes arrangements according to a partner's transportation needs. Norb Dickneite is the lead technician responsible for overseeing equipment

maintenance and making sure the operation runs smooth and travelers have a safe driving experience.

Travel Services staff support the Motor Pool. Randy Kelley is the supervisor. She has been with the Motor Pool for

### Where Are They Now?

**Past Service Attendants and Their Current Position at MoDOT**

- Kevin Branch  
Senior Survey Tech - D5
- Norb Dickneite  
Senior GS Technician
- Harry Gilmore  
Sr. Information Systems Tech
- Lawrence Harmon  
Sr. Equipment Tech - D5
- Bill Haselhorst  
Senior Mail Center Operator
- Alex Holterman  
Senior Equipment Tech - D5
- Missy Lackman  
Senior System Management Tech
- Randy Lamons  
Senior Equipment Tech - D5
- Mike Schillers  
Senior Equipment Tech - D5
- Melissa Wilbers  
Traffic Mgmt. & Operations Eng.
- Dave Wright  
Senior Mail Center Operator

nearly 20 years and was involved with the inception of the Shuttle Service. The rest of the team includes Scott Nichols, Tina Grothoff, Bridget Althoff, Marge Tellman and Janis Gieck.

The shuttle service is still going strong after 15 years. MoDOT's Central Office employees are fortunate to have this transportation option. Now as the Motor Pool looks at ways to improve the shuttle service in the future, staff is very conscientious about MoDOT's energy efficiency efforts. Therefore, they are looking at ways to experiment with the shuttle schedules (look for a revised schedule soon), and at ways to operate the service most efficiently.

## All Gave Some, Some Gave All

by Sandy Hentges

On Sept. 8, 208 golfers gave some of their time and money to help the families of public servants who gave their lives in the line of duty. On Transportation Day of the 5th Annual Benevolent Fund 10-33 Golf Tournament at the Columbia Country Club, the group raised more than \$17,000.

"Most everyone that plays has a connection to someone who was killed while they were doing their job," said Don Hillis, director of System Management and tournament organizer. "This is just our way of helping their families – those who are left behind to pick up the pieces and move on."

The 10-33 Benevolent Fund makes a flat donation to each family at the time of

their loss. "It gives them a little financial breathing room at a very difficult time," said Hillis.

Winners of this year's tournament are:  
**A Flight** – 58 – Steve Dunn, Earl Wallace, Doug Foley, Dean Hudspeth

**B Flight** – 63 – Dan Fischer, Lee VanAuld, John Buffington, Brian Jones

**C Flight** – 67 – Shawn Nilges, Jim McGinnis, DeWayne Coffey, Keith Jenkins

**D Flight** – 71 – Barb Friedman, Kyle Schomaker, Matt Wilke, Derek Vap

**Closest to the Pin Women:** Missy Wilbers  
**Closest to the Pin Men:** Undetermined  
**Longest Drive Women:** Kelly Harvey  
**Longest Drive Men:** Andrew Fritz

## One Unbelievable Summer

by Kristi Jamison

As if a pre-Olympics trip to China in June wasn't exciting enough (see October *Connections*), MoDOT Geologist George Davis became a hero this summer.

Returning from a vacation in September, he and a friend were driving across Interstate 70 when they came upon an accident that had just occurred.

A car had lost control in the rain near the Blackwater exit and crossed over the median into the path of a tractor-trailer. Although the truck driver tried to avoid the car, he ended up hitting the car and then a rock wall. The truck overturned and its engine caught on fire (see picture below).



Davis' friend and another motorist tried to no avail to put out the fire while Davis went to help the driver, who was desperately trying to get out of the window, but couldn't free himself. Davis kicked the windshield free and lifted it aside so the driver could get out before the cab caught on fire, which it did moments later. Davis then worked to divert traffic away from the scene, crediting his MoDOT experience and training for knowing what to do in this situation.

"You find yourself in an interesting situation like this only once or twice in a lifetime," he said. "You can do one of two things – screw up badly or make a difference. In this case, because of my MoDOT training, I was able to make a difference. I did the right thing!"

The drivers of both vehicles were seriously injured, but both survived thanks to Davis, his friend and others on the scene.

*Davis has worked at MoDOT for more than 16 years. He is serving a third term as president for the Association of Missouri Geologists and is also president of the Missouri section of the American Institute of Professional Geologists.*

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# D1

## Northwest

### Rodeo Helps Crews Prepare For Winter

story by Holly Murphy, photos by Shaun Schmitz

Two hundred sixty-nine employees ran the snowplow and loader courses at the Northwest District Winter Skills Rodeo at the Downtown Riverfront Park in St. Joseph in September. Numerous other employees also worked the event in various capacities such as judging and scoring. Participants involved in winter snow removal operations participated to brush up on their skills before winter arrives. The rodeo consisted of four components: a loader course, truck course, written test and vehicle inspection. This year the Rodeo was completed in three days versus five in past years.

We want to congratulate Doug Crookshanks, Maintenance crew leader at the Traffic Shop, and Tony Lager, senior Maintenance worker at Bethany, for being the two top overall District winners. These two competed against other district winners at the State Finals Rodeo in Sedalia in October.



Assistant District Engineer Tony McGaughy thanked employees for their dedication and hard work during a year of much weather turmoil.



Becky Baker, senior construction inspector, navigates the loader course.



Rodeo participants take the written test during the three day Winter Skills Rodeo. Each contestant participated in the loader and truck course as well as the written test and vehicle pre-trip inspection.



Two trucks participating on the loader course at all times kept the judges busy.

### Twenty-Two Schools are Buckling Up for the Battle of the Belt Challenge

by Holly Murphy

Twenty-two schools in the Northwest District have accepted the challenge and are participating in the Battle of the Belt, a statewide competition sponsored by the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. The competition is in its third year. Last year, only six schools participated in the Northwest District, so the Northwest Coalition is very pleased that over 40 percent of Northwest Missouri schools are participating this year. Many of the schools had their initial seat belt surveys completed in early October and were surprised by the results. They found that many high school students were buckled up, but it was the adults and small children that were not buckled up. Many schools have asked for supporting materials to share with elementary students as well as the targeted high school-age children. The

Coalition agreed to purchase a supply of Buckle Up t-shirts in school colors for each school that is participating in the challenge. The organizers of the challenge in each school decide how to distribute the shirts and other materials. Many of the t-shirts have been thrown at pep assemblies and have been worn at homecoming parades.



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### Cold In-Place Roadway Project Complete

story by Holly Murphy, photos by Wes Farris

Cold in-place recycling is a technique which was used on two minor routes this summer in District 1. It involves milling only two to three inches to remove the dry layer of the existing pavement. In similar procedures, milling is done full depth. With this process some additional asphalt oils are added to the milled material, and then the reclaimed material is placed back on the road. This process is then followed with a chip seal surface. Another benefit to this procedure is that it took minimal preparation from maintenance. The contractor on this project was Sem Materials of Kansas City.

District Engineer Don Wichern stated, "We believe that this process will give us twice the longevity on these routes, thus reducing the costs to maintain our minor route system."



The cold in-place recycling method rejuvenates the existing material on the road.



# D2

## North Central

### Wrapping Up Fall Meetings

by Tammy Wallace

The district wrapped up another set of employee fall meetings in October. The district engineer, assistant district engineer, Human Resources manager and several others committed eight days on the calendar to travel the district and meet with employees. Likewise, employees committed an entire day to learn about upcoming initiatives and celebrate past accomplishments.

The meetings began with discussion on the employee satisfaction survey results. Dan Niec presented the district results which were very positive and had scored the highest in the state in several categories.

Dan explained that employee engagement will be a big focus statewide this year. He discussed those statistics and encouraged employees to offer suggestions on how we can keep our employees engaged and enjoying their jobs.

During each meeting the Conversation for Moving Forward presentation was

shared with employees, along with upcoming plans and how we will move forward with other initiatives. Presentations were given on:

- Minor Roads Initiative
- Safe & Sound Bridge Program
- Fuel Consumption Reduction
- Winter Operations Guidance

The flood recognition presentation given by Kevin James was both shocking and amazing. It was shocking to see the district had worked over 17,600 hours during the three flood events, and amazing to watch the flood photos transformed to a music video by the Multimedia Services group.

Business and Benefits gave presentations on the Charitable Campaign, insurance changes, cafeteria plan and other topics.

Ellen Gehringer talked about the WorkLIFE Center that opened in August, and how the departments of Human Resources, Business and Ben-



Discussing the Employee Satisfaction Survey Results, Dan asks, "What can we do to get employees excited about their jobs?"

efits, Risk Management, Information Systems and Credit Union are dedicated to assisting employees from a new hire through their retirement.

She also explained the WorkLIFE Liaison Program, which gives employees a point of contact to four individuals who are technical experts in their fields: Vickie Ray, Human Resources; Nancy Davis, Risk Management; Jennifer Butner, Business & Benefits; and Damon LaFaver, Information Systems. These individuals can provide employees with another avenue, in addition to the traditional routes, to investigate and resolve any concerns they may have.

- Generate revenue through disposal of excess right of way, equipment and scrap materials.

Curious about District 2's Top 10? The list and details will be captured in the December issue of *Connections*.



Campaign Coordinator Sarah Forney points out the many different available charities.

### Rodeo Rewards

by Tammy Wallace



Richard (top) and Jason (bottom) receive gift cards from District Engineer Dan Niec.



The Winter Skills Rodeo proved our district is more than ready for that first snow storm, as all 249 participants met or exceeded the 80 percent score goal. In addition, 140 participants (56 percent) scored above 90 percent on the skills training.

Richard McClain, senior Maintenance worker at Unionville, received the top score for the second year in a row, while Jason Sears, Maintenance crew leader at Moberly, came in second. Both came in above 97 percent.

Richard and Jason advanced to the statewide competition; and although they didn't bring home top honors, they did a great job there as well. Congratulations!

To wrap up the day, the district's Top 10 accomplishments for 2008 were presented along with the district's priorities for the coming year. It's always rewarding to look back and brag about our successes, and to look ahead at new endeavors.

The upcoming district priorities are:

- Improving the condition of our minor roads
- Safe & Sound Bridge Program
- Open Route 36 by the end of 2009
- Award the Alternate Route 63 project in FY 2010
- Complete the Glasgow Bridge partial replacement project and begin the Miami Bridge partial replacement

Last but not least, employees heard from Director Pete Rahn via pre-taped video. Pete talked about the accomplishments we can all be proud of. He also talked about upcoming challenges we are facing and how he is looking forward to working with us to continue our success.

The fall meetings give employees the opportunity to see the big picture of the district and the state. The information arms employees with the knowledge to speak with MoDOT customers and even their family and friends about the great things we are doing and the great things yet to come.

### Another Hole-in-One

by Suzi Muller

The Marshall area golf tournament to raise money for the district's employee fund was another hole-in-one this year. A total of 31 teams participated in the outing; six more than the first year of the organized fundraiser.

Last year the tourney raised \$1,905 for the employee fund; making the single largest contribution to the fund since its inception in December 2006.

This year's outing broke the group's own record by raising a total contribu-

tion of \$2,565! They again take top honor with the single largest fund raising event.

To all who participated in any way, we can't thank you enough.



Part of the fun came when everyone took a break for the leaders to collect their prizes.

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# D3

## Northeast



Joe Matchey, contractor employee with PCI, and MoDOT Construction Inspector Steve Spegal, remove the barricades on U.S. 36 near a railroad overpass that opened to four lanes just east of Monroe City. The opening signified completion of 11 miles on the 52-mile four-lane project along U.S. 36 between Hannibal and Macon.

## Roadeo Winner is a Two-Timer

“He’s goooooood....,” is a comment you might hear when someone talks about Troy maintenance team member Mark Sprock. That’s because this is the second year in a row Sprock has advanced to the statewide Roadeo competition representing the Northeast District. This year, Mexico maintenance team member Mark Wortman scored highest in the district competition, but was unable to attend the statewide competition, giving Mike Ahrens, also of Mexico, the opportunity as the district’s third place recipient.

While hoping to do better, Mike and Mark were happy with their performances, even though they didn’t place.

“We both pull antique tractors, so we’re used to competition, but it still can make you nervous,” Mike said. Mark and Mike agreed the toughest part of the driving course is the alley dock on the truck. “It was more difficult this year because I’m older and my sight isn’t as good!” joked Mark. Mike enjoyed watching the other experts from across the state and learning from them.



Mark Sprock, Mark Wortman and Mike Ahrens were Roadeo winners.

The median score for Northeast District Roadeo participants was 92 percent, which is consistent with last year’s numbers.

One of the challenges of the competition is to avoid mailboxes, and this year, extra incentive was given to participants since the mailbox bore the name “MUNDLE” on the side, as a fun reminder that Maintenance Superintendent Butch Mundle will be on “snow patrol” again this winter.



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## 52-mile Project, Now 41-mile Project

It’s getting faster, easier and safer to get across the northern part of Missouri as MoDOT continues to expand U.S. 36 to four-lane.

Just two years ago, four counties along a 52-mile stretch of two-lane highway on U.S. 36 between Hannibal and Macon voted to support a 1/2 cent, 15-year sales tax to fund fifteen percent of adding lanes to the highway. Now, those communities are 11 miles closer to having the entire 52-mile project completed as the section between Hannibal and Monroe City opened last month.

In cooperation with the North Central District, the U.S. 36 four-lane project has been on track to be completed by the end of next year. However, flash flooding and an excessively wet summer has the construction schedule sort of ‘soggy.’

“We’ll just have to see how the winter goes to determine how much work we can make up from the summer,” explained Marty Lincoln, one of the resident engineers overseeing part of the project.

As each section of the 52-mile project is completed, all who drive the highway agree it will be a value-added benefit to safety and the economy.

## The Arrive Alive Pledge



Hannibal High School students, donning their traditional homecoming black and red for the football game, stop at the gate to sign the “Arrive Alive” pledge that they will wear their seat belts, pay attention and slow down while driving. This is one of many activities several schools used to increase seat belt usage during the Battle of the Belt competition. The banner is now hung in the high school to remind students of the importance of safe driving.

## A Charity Cookout

Several Northeast District employees were treated to a cookout “Northwest” style as Assistant District Engineer Tony Mcgaughy and District Engineer Don Wischern from District 1 made good on their pledge to cook for departments in the Northeast District

who contributed to the Charitable Campaign in 2007. Departments who were the recipients of this delectable food included Right of Way, Information Systems, Signal, Administration, Human Resources, project managers, Credit Union, Operations, and the Monticello and Wayland Maintenance buildings. Which district will win this year’s U.S. 36 Show Me You Care Charitable Campaign Series?



It was a gorgeous day for a cookout as Tony Mcgaughy and Don Wischern, from the Northwest District, grilled up hamburgers and hot dogs for several Northeast District employees.



# D4

## Kansas City Area

### Noland Road Bridge Over I-70 Complete

by Steve Porter

The Independence Chamber of Commerce and the city of Independence joined MoDOT for a ribbon cutting on the Noland Road Bridge over Interstate 70, marking an official completion to a highly successful project that opened the bridge weeks earlier than planned last April.

The Noland Road Bridge is a vital link in the Independence community. Removal and replacement of the bridge could have taken well over a year, but MoDOT and Independence residents, business owners and city officials discussed options that significantly reduced the closure and restored the vital link.

MoDOT worked with consulting engineers at DRG to design the new

bridge to allow the contractor, APAC – Kansas, Inc., to move quickly to remove the old bridge and build a new one within weeks. The bridge closed Feb. 16 and re-opened to traffic April 13, a stunning pace of replacement that drew praise and notice from throughout the region, according to Elizabeth Wright, district engineer.

The swift, successful bridge replacement was a product of teamwork involving the contractor, the community and MoDOT. Early in construction, APAC proposed complete closure of I-70 for several hours in each direction during the weekend of March 7-9 to allow further acceleration of the project. The closure allowed cutting out weeks of additional time so that

APAC could quickly deliver a project of great value to the Independence community and to I-70 travelers. Reconstruction of the four ramps, shoulder work and signal installation continued into September on the \$9.3 million project.



## Route D Reopens to Travelers

by Steve Porter

Representatives from the village of Loch Lloyd, the city of Belton and MoDOT celebrated another major project completion by cutting the ribbon in late September to reopen Route D, concluding weeks of closure for the vital state highway through Cass County.



Officials from MoDOT and Cass County, Belton and Loch Lloyd cut the ribbon to reopen Route D.

MoDOT's improvements to Route D provide a smoother, long-lasting highway that doesn't demand continual maintenance. This unusual project involved segmented construction, which allowed Clarkson Construction Co., the contractor, to close the highway to through traffic and divide the construction site into three areas, rebuilding the road one-third at a time.

Route D was closed to all through traffic from Route 58 in Cass County to Route 150 in south Kansas City beginning July 29, with only local access for property owners. Using the old concrete pavement as a stabilized base, geotextile was placed on top of the base and a five-inch-thick layer of concrete was poured over the old highway surface. Access

to Loch Lloyd was provided from the north during the first phase, and then switched to the newly-constructed pavement on the south side. The middle phase from just north of Loch Lloyd to near 164th Street concluded before Labor Day, with a left-turn lane added at 165th Street. The third phase, reconstructing the pavement from about 164th Street north to Route 150, included a left-turn lane at Kenneth Road.

Traffic signals have also been constructed at Route 58 and Route D, and 6-foot-wide asphalt shoulders are now in place throughout the project.

Closing Route D for seven weeks disrupted more than 11,000 travelers each day, but ensured completion before fall and delivered a far more durable highway.

## Celebration for the New Route 150 Bridge over Big Creek

by Kerri Lewis

The new Route 150 Bridge over Big Creek in Greenwood officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in early October.

The replacement of a structurally deficient, functionally obsolete and substandard bridge over the Big Creek and Union Pacific Railroad was designed after the public's input convinced MoDOT to keep at least one lane open through Greenwood during construction. For several months last summer, one-lane, signal-controlled traffic moved slowly across half of the old bridge while the new bridge was being built. The staged construction ensured that businesses continued to draw customers and the two sides of

the community would not be isolated.

"Keeping the highway open ensured customer access to merchants in Greenwood who rely on outside shoppers looking for the many unique items offered in their shops," said Sharon Taegel, MoDOT Assistant to the District Engineer. "Greenwood's financial vitality depends on the success of the businesses flanking Route 150."

Special thanks went to attendees that included Greenwood Elementary School Principal Teera Rogers and her pupils from the student council; Barry and Jack Wilkinson, honoring their father, Willard Wilkinson, who worked on the previous bridge construction project in 1939; and the merchants and residents of Green-



wood, who were so patient through two years of construction.

The new \$7 million bridge offers two 12-foot lanes in each direction with 8-foot shoulders and a protected walkway to ensure pedestrian safety. Built in approximately the same location as the existing bridge, the new 835-foot-long bridge spans both Big Creek and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks in

the heart of the South Jackson County community. Construction began in March 2007, and Route 150 was kept open at reduced capacity for several months during construction.

Route 150 and the bridge carry 12,000 vehicles per day through the city of Greenwood. The new bridge can accommodate traffic for years to come.

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# D5

## Central

### Warsaw Employee Places First at Winter Skills Rodeo

by Holly Dentner

Senior Maintenance Worker Gary Jones can add some serious bragging rights to his career accomplishments after placing first in the statewide 2008 Winter Skills Rodeo on Oct. 15.

MoDOT conducts the Winter Skills Rodeo every year to help test our employees' expertise, and includes a written exam, equipment inspections and a hands-on driving skills course.

"The Winter Skills Rodeo refreshes our maintenance crews' snow removal skills and puts them in the mindset for handling winter weather," said Mike Belt, maintenance superintendent. "The Rodeo is a good way to make sure our crew members are ready and gives them a chance to share their experiences with newer coworkers."

Gary was able to compete on the statewide level after placing first in the Central District Rodeo, held in September. He said it feels good to be at the top



Director of System Management Don Hillis congratulates Senior Maintenance Worker Gary Jones on placing first in the 2008 Winter Skills Rodeo.

of the approximately 3,000 employees who participate.

"It's a real accomplishment, especially with all the employees involved," said Gary. "It's a tough competition."

The driving test during the Rodeo simulates backing into narrow spaces for loading, plowing in a straight line and through obstacles, clearing curbs and interchanges and other challenges. Gary said the course wasn't that different from his previous experience, but this time he adjusted his strategy.

"I focused on the key points of the course where I could do well," he said. "I worked on those areas to improve my accuracy and speed."

Gary has been with MoDOT for almost 15 years and works at the Warsaw maintenance building. Getting ready for winter weather is actually a good thing for him, because he says he doesn't mind the cold and actually enjoys plowing snow.

"Pushing snow gives me a sense of accomplishment because I can see the result of my work," said Gary. "I know I'm helping the public get around on safer roads after I've plowed my routes."

Gary received a plaque and Bass Pro gift card for his first place ranking, but there was one additional perk that made his day.

"There's something really nice about seeing my name on that trophy."

Last year in the Central District, maintenance crews worked approximately 65,000 hours to plow and salt mid-Missouri roads. The Rodeo is a great way to motivate employees to compete, but it is also a vital training opportunity designed to make the most of the millions of dollars MoDOT invests each year in winter road maintenance.

### Buckle Bear Highlights Child Passenger Safety Week



Child Passenger Safety Week, Sept. 22-27, provided yet another opportunity for Buckle Bear to serve the Central Region Coalition for Roadway Safety. He appeared during a Safe Kids Day event at a children's entertainment center called "Bonkers" in Columbia to help kids remember to always buckle up.

Matt Myers

After receiving a special invitation from the Jefferson City Special Learning Center, Buckle Bear was honored to meet the students while Area Engineer Alan Trampe talked to them about how important it is to stay buckled up in their booster seats.



Alan Trampe

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### Recent Retirements at D5

by Holly Dentner

After a combined total of 85 years of service, the following employees are retiring from MoDOT. The Central District thanks them for their service and dedication.



**Mary Patricia Ellebracht** retired on Sept. 1 after 23 years of service with MoDOT. Mary started at District 6, working as a clerk typist,

district payroll clerk, telephone operator and senior clerk before transferring to District 5 a little over two years ago. She retired as the office assistant at the Camdenton Project Office.

**Dean Whitfield** worked at MoDOT for 30 years before retiring Nov. 1 as maintenance supervisor at Montreal. He also worked as a maintenance worker and senior maintenance worker



at the Osage Beach building during his time at MoDOT.

**Jeanette Brockman** will retire Dec. 1 after 12 years at MoDOT. Jeanette is a senior maintenance worker at the Stover building, but has also worked for District 4 in Oak Grove and Concordia. She has also held the positions of maintenance worker and intermediate maintenance worker.



**Mary Ann Bax** will retire Dec. 1 after 20 years at MoDOT. Mary Ann began with MoDOT as a senior stenographer at Central

Office Design. She also worked in Information Systems as the senior help desk operator and as a special permit agent in the former Maintenance and Traffic division. She became a customer service representative at Central Office in 2000, and transferred to the Central District in 2006 when the Central Office and District 5 customer service centers merged.



# D6

## St. Louis Area

### Inside Look on Design of New Mississippi River Bridge

by Andrew Gates

Design work on the Mississippi River Bridge between St. Louis and East St. Louis is in full swing. In early September, crews started drilling in the Mississippi River to get geologic data on the riverbed makeup. Later in the month, team members met with contractors and suppliers to discuss an innovative method to get contractor input during the design of the bridge. The design team started in September with geology experts working around

Each hole takes about 48 hours to drill.

“We are going through about 20 feet of water and then drill through about 50 to 70 feet of mud and silt,” said John Szturo, a design team member of the MRB project. “After that, we drill about 85 feet into the limestone bedrock of the river.”

“This is vital to the process of understanding what we are facing during the design process,” said Horn. “The more



The New Mississippi River Bridge Team begins the drilling stage.

the clock on a 5,000-square-foot barge floating on the river. They are drilling just off both banks of the river to get samples of the river bottom and the underlying rock.

By analyzing the data from the drilling, the design team can accurately model the river bed, and then design the river piers, which are the portions of the bridge’s foundations in the river that support the driver surface.

“Although we have a pretty good idea what we will find as we drill, we need to make sure we have extremely precise information to design the piers,” said Greg Horn, Mississippi River Bridge project director. “We need to know exactly where bedrock is, how deep it is and exactly what type of stone is at the river bottom. When we know that, we use that information to design the piers to make sure they are solid.”

Crews will drill five holes at each pier location, one on the Missouri bank of the river and one on the Illinois bank.

data we have on the river’s profile (what the river looks like under the water and silt) the better we can anticipate all the design requirements for the bridge. This will help us construct a high quality bridge that will provide service for the region well into the 22nd century.”

More than 150 people gathered in the St. Louis Engineers Club on Sept. 24 to discuss the bidding process on the Mississippi River Bridge construction project.

Attendees from the Mississippi River Bridge team, as well as construction contractors and suppliers had the opportunity to hear and discuss the upcoming project. Additionally, the attendees discussed some of the innovative elements of the project, including contractor involvement in the design of the bridge.

“This industry meeting was a great opportunity for the MRB team to get together with the people who could be involved in constructing or provid-



The design of the New Mississippi River Bridge is in full swing.

ing services for the Mississippi River Bridge project,” said Horn.

“It was also a great opportunity for suppliers to talk to some of the contractors at the meeting and let them know what capabilities they can offer. Although contractors won’t bid on the bridge until next year, this is a great chance for suppliers to get their foot in the door with the potential construction teams.”

After a brief presentation on the history of the bridge project, attendees heard about the biggest difference between the MRB project and most other design-bid-build construction projects. As a part of design, the engineering team will be encouraging the bridge contractors to submit ideas to reduce costs of the bridge by incorporating alternate methods of constructing the project.

Initially, companies with major river bridge construction experience will be asked to pre-qualify for the bidding process. The prequalification is pass and fail; in other words, if the company has the ability to construct the bridge, they will qualify. Upon prequalification, the company can, if they choose, participate in the contractor involvement process.

The contractor involvement process allows contractors to work confidentially with the bridge design team to incorporate other methods of construction, or other materials, to build contractor-specific bid packages for the project.

“Our objective is to reduce the risk for our construction contractors,” said Randy Hitt, MRB deputy director. “Contractors have great suggestions for construction methods to reduce costs of building a project.”

“Often, they invest time and money into the suggestion and then risk having that suggestion rejected. With this process, we will pre-approve those suggestions, and work with the contractors to incorporate them into a ‘personalized’ bid package.”

While working with contractors, the bridge team will also develop a base set of plans, using standard construction techniques. In late summer 2009, contractors will have a second opportunity to pre-qualify to bid on the project, although they don’t have to qualify again to bid if they have previously qualified, said Hague.

When the design team sends the bid packages out, each package will be personalized for those contractors who have participated in the contractor involvement process. Those remaining contractors will get a package including the base plans.

Based on those plans, the bridge team will take the lowest bid and will award the contract in late 2009, with construction on the \$640 million bridge project starting in 2010. Designs for the Missouri interchange will go through a similar process before award.

Involving the contractors early in the construction process is a new technique for design-bid-build projects, said Pete Clogston, the Federal Highway Administration project manager on the MRB team. “The FHWA will be looking to Missouri and Illinois, as well as the participating contractors, to give us feedback on how well this works, as well as some lessons learned to improve the overall process.”

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The team conducts the drilling off both banks of the river to get samples of the river bottom and the underlying rock.



# D7

Southwest

## 'Promised Land' Opens in October

by Lori Marble

What has been described by one Southwest District Engineer as the "project of a lifetime," Missouri Highway 249, in many ways an engineer's greatest dream, opened to the public Oct. 6.

Just over six miles of four-lane highway, the Range Line Bypass (as it is referred to locally) is packed full with

was appointed as the first superintendent of state highways in 1919. He remarked on the leadership and aggressive thinking of Malang in his campaign for better roads throughout southern Missouri.

Sen. Gary Nodler noted he first heard mention of a bypass in the early '70s.

"After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, today we have reached the promised land," stated Nodler.

"As we open up the entire 249 section today it is with much anticipation...if ever there was a highway that could 'delight' our customers, I think this might just be it," said Becky Baltz, district engineer.

To demonstrate the improved ease of travel, ceremony attendees caravanned across the new highway with all the vehicles festooned with "249" car flags.

U.S. Rep. Roy Blunt praised Southwest district engineers and construction teams in their ingenuity in turning land, abandoned by a once-vibrant mining industry, into a sturdy basis for a major highway.

Concluding the ceremony Baltz remarked, "We look forward to this roadway showcasing an ever increasingly vibrant and economically powerful Jasper County."



Senior Right of Way Specialist Mari Heeter sings the national anthem.

16 bridges, the tallest of which is 75 feet high, and the longest is 1,500 feet. That's five football fields in length, a perfect comparison for the many great football rivalries in the surrounding communities.

The highway is touted as a community connector, uniting the towns of Joplin, Carterville, Duenweg, Duquesne, Webb City and Carthage, decreasing travel time by approximately 10 minutes.

Speaking at the dedication ceremony, Joplin historian Brad Belk pointed to John Malang, a Joplin resident who

Shaun Schmitz

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Carthage Senior Construction Inspectors Rowland Harmon, left, and Brad Gripka roll out the banner for the vehicles to drive through.

Shaun Schmitz

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## Child Safety Seats Crushed to Keep Children Safe

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis



Sarcozie Maintenance Crew Leader Danny Bowling prepares to crush the old, damaged or recalled car seats.

On Friday, Sept. 26 in the I-44 Welcome Center parking lot near Joplin, approximately 70 old, damaged or recalled child safety seats were piled up and crushed with a front-end loader.

"We're crushing these car seats because we want to make sure unsafe seats are not used again," said Paula Bone with the Joplin Police Department.

The event took place during Child Passenger Safety Week, Sept. 21-27.

Child safety seats used in the crush included:

- Safety seats more than six years old;
- Seats that are missing parts or have evidence of cracking, worn harness webbing or broken buckles;
- Recalled seats. Contact the manufacturer or check [www.nhsta.dot.gov](http://www.nhsta.dot.gov);
- The seat has been involved in a moderate or severe crash.

In 2007, 15 children in Missouri under age 8 were killed and 1,866 were injured as occupants in motor vehicle crashes. A 2006 booster seat law requires children to be in a booster seat if they are ages 4 through 7 years old, unless:

- They are at least 80 pounds.
- They are at least 4'9" tall.

When used correctly, child safety seats are 71 percent effective in preventing fatalities for infants and 54 percent effective for toddlers.

Tween children ages 8-12 are encouraged to sit in the back seat because a front-seat airbag could harm their still-growing bodies.

Visit [www.saveMOlives.com](http://www.saveMOlives.com) for more information about child passenger safety.

## Trading Trash for Lunch

by Wendy Brunner-Lewis

Employees in the Rich Hill Maintenance building were treated to lunch at Butler's Flaming Latern Restaurant in October as recognition for picking up the most bags of trash in the district during April's "No MOre Trash! Bash."

District 7 crews picked up 876 bags of trash across the district, and the incarcerated crews on loan from District 8 picked up 3,000 bags that month. Back row pictured from left to right is Roadside Management Supervisor Sta-

cy Armstrong, Walter Headrick, Galen Steuck, Steve Burchell, Bob King, Bryan Querry and District 7 Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator Vicky Luciano. Front row from left to right is Roy Umstaddt, Shane Kelly, Bill Thorp, Mike Mellenbruch and Charlie Griefe.





# D8

## Springfield Area

### Spike in Price Requires More Controlled Salt Use

by Angela Eden

Last year, salt cost District 8 about \$55 a ton. This year the cost is \$70 a ton. Big jump. Big challenge.

Salt use will have to be even more closely measured and monitored than in the past, said District Maintenance Engineer Dave O'Connor. It makes proper calibration of computerized salt spreaders even more important.

"Salt is getting to be a budget breaker," O'Connor said, largely because of increased fuel costs for delivery.

"Our goal this year," he said, "is to reduce our usage by being proactive, being more efficient with our equipment and monitoring our applications and adjusting as needed."

The district will start the winter with more salt on hand – 32,500 tons – and that's a positive note. New salt storage facilities were added this year at

Wheatland, Buffalo, Fair Grove and Republic Maintenance, increasing the inventory by 2,400 tons.

"We're going to plow like we've always plowed," said Assistant District Engineer Matt Seiler, but greater thrift will be necessary. Once all facilities are filled this fall, the intent is not to purchase any more salt during the winter months.

Other materials will be used more than ever to extend the salt supply, Seiler said. That includes spreading more rock where needed for traction on lesser traveled routes and making greater use of "beet juice" mixed with salt.

Salt use has averaged 19,000 tons a year the past four winters, but crews went through 34,900 tons last winter, thanks in part to more ice events. A record use of 43,000 tons occurred in 2002-03.

### Reusing Signal Components Saves Time, Money for Safety

by Bob Edwards

District 8's long-standing practice of recycling traffic signal equipment returned even higher dividends this year when signals quickly had to be added after the Route 13 relief route project at Branson West was completed.

Signals had not been designed into the project at Route 13's intersection with Route 413 and the old highway. But a number of crashes at the intersection after the new roadway was opened to traffic showed signals were needed.

Traffic Engineer Joe Rickman said the district, which has salvaged signal parts for years, had on hand the used poles, mast arms and other equipment that would work for the Route 13 project. New equipment in the district's inventory included a controller, signal heads, lenses and wiring. Not having to order these materials saved three to four months and roughly \$150,000, he said.

The contractor on the Branson West project did all the underground preparatory work for the signals and district

signal crew members put up the rest. The signals were activated in mid-September instead of much later in the year.

"What we were looking for was a quick, low-cost solution to get the signals installed," Rickman said.

The recycled signal parts normally are used to replace signals damaged or knocked down when hit by vehicles or hammered by severe weather.

The district's traffic signal parts inventory grew in recent years as at least 10 intersections were widened in partnership projects with the city of Springfield. The signal equipment, though in good condition, no longer fit the new dual left-turn intersections.

District Engineer Kirk Juranas said reclaiming signal components is a responsible practice and another way to provide value to MoDOT's customers.

"It allows us to be much more flexible and faster in reacting to congestion and crashes," Juranas said.



Bob Edwards

### D8 at Work

Replacing a dump truck's rear-end pinion seal (top photo) at Ozark Maintenance is Ozark Area Equipment Technician Cody Rogers.

Cutting weeds as part of a mowing operation along West Bypass (Route 160) in Springfield (second photo) is Springfield Maintenance Worker Debbie Rodriguez.

Sealing a new chip-seal surface on Polk County Route T near Aldrich (third photo) is Buffalo Senior Maintenance Worker Shannon Johnson, part of a crew drawn from nine shops.

Going over a traffic control plan are (bottom photo) Springfield Intermediate Construction Inspector Page Morgan, left, and APAC-Missouri Superintendent Greg Hayden before opening a new roundabout on Greene County Route EE west of Springfield. The roundabout will have five "legs," including a new roadway that will serve as the entrance to the new terminal being built at Springfield-Branson National Airport.



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# D9

## South Central

### Employee Fairs Focus on Communication

A new format for employee fairs was introduced in the South Central District during October. Feedback from employees indicates the change up resulted in a more informative day.

The new format was centered on communication, breaking the employee base into small groups to encourage discussion. Groups of no more than 15 were presented with six topics in session format, hosted by members of the management team. Topics were: Moving Missouri Forward, Tool and Equipment Challenge/Solutions At Work, Wellness/Insurance Changes, Benefits/Open Enrollment, District 9 Employee Advisory Extension Council and Customer Service Center/Emergency Operations.

Following the session blocks, employees were given the opportunity to visit booths including: Safe & Sound, Project Delivery, Credit Union, Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign, Business and Benefits, Community Relations, Transportation Employees Association of Missouri (TEAM), CitiStreet/ING, Employee Crossroads Fund, Gov

Deals/E-Updates and the American Red Cross. In addition, flu shots were offered to employees free of charge.

District Engineer Tom Stehn wrapped up each day with a brief summary. He encouraged employees to absorb the information they had heard that day



Employees enjoy a hot dog and chip lunch provided by the Transportation Employees Association of Missouri and the District 9 Credit Union.

and contact any of the presenters with questions. He also challenged them to realize their roles as ambassadors for the department. “We have a lot of changes happening within the department,” he said. “Change is how we get better. I thank you for everything you do to serve the people of Missouri.”



District Safety and Health Manager Darren Petrus conducts a session regarding insurance changes at an employee fair.

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### Eight Schools Accept Challenge to Buckle Up

Eight high schools have answered the call of South Central District Battle of the Belt Coordinator Kelly Martin. The schools are: Willow Springs, Newburg, Ellington, Thayer, Summersville, Van Buren, Eminence and Steelville.

With primary seat belt legislation a priority for the department and teen safety belt usage still in need of a boost, Martin said Battle of the Belt is an important campaign.

“In my first year as district coordinator for Battle of the Belt, I am very excited about this opportunity to help educate young drivers about

seat belt safety,” Martin said. “A wide variety of programs will be offered to schools through this education effort including the rollover demonstrator, safety belt convincer and assembly presentations. These are expected to provide hands-on demonstrations of seat belt safety.”

Martin explained when combined with active, involved school sponsors, these activities will be a powerful move in the right direction. “The goal is to aid in the reduction of motor-vehicle-related injuries and fatalities among Missouri high school students through increased



## Battle of the Belt

### Fast Pace for Safe & Sound in South Central District

Just as in all districts across the state, action quickly followed the September announcement that Safe & Sound would be moving ahead. With signs now at all 36 South Central District



bridge locations, District Bridge Engineer and Safe & Sound Coordinator Ed Hess is busy working with staff in Design, Community Relations and other departments involved in launching the first wave of projects. “I look forward to the success of this program in

our district thanks to all the hard work everyone is putting into it,” he said.

Meetings with legislators and presiding county commissioners, set for early November, are focused on program education and bridge information. Hess said the work group within the district felt it was important to bring these key stakeholders on board prior to going to the public as a means of building consent for the work.

Meanwhile, the design work for the first nine bridges will be taking place in preparation for community briefings where staff will explain the necessity for closure.

### Ipock, Keeney Represent District 9 at Statewide Rodeo

After a rainy day of statewide Rodeo competition, Winona Senior Maintenance Worker Randall Ipock and Cuba Intermediate Maintenance Worker Jake Keeney finished with results District 9 can be proud of. Ipock finished third and Keeney was sixteenth out of the top 20 in the state.

Maintenance Engineer Henry Haggard said both gentlemen performed well at the district Rodeo and he was proud to have them represent District 9 at the statewide event. “Congratulations goes to Randall and Jake for their performance in Sedalia,” he said.



From left to right: Winona Senior Maintenance Worker Randall Ipock, Director of System Management Don Hillis and Cuba Intermediate Maintenance Worker Jake Keeney

Cathy Morrison



# D10

## Southeast

### D10 Prepares for Winter Season with Skills Rodeo

To prepare for the upcoming winter season District 10 employees tested their snowplow expertise during recent training exercises at the Southeast District Winter Skills Rodeo.

The Rodeo was developed to emphasize safety and efficiency while driving plow-equipped trucks to clear snow and ice from the roads and operating loaders to store and load materials.

District 10 kicked off their district Rodeo in Sikeston on Sept. 22. As part of the Rodeo training, employees completed a written exam, pre-trip vehicle inspections and hands-on driving skills courses. Employee scores were kept on each component, with the top 10 overall scores advancing to the district finals on Sept. 29.

The top employees from District 10 that advanced and competed in the district finals included: Shannon Chidester,

Darren Thurston, Dustin Dunning, Tim Crader, Donald Treat, Aaron Jones, Thomas Brickhaus, Mike Riley, Mike Schwendemann, and (a tie between) Scott Bronenkant and Giles King. These top employees went through various training exercises at the district

finals, with the top two overall scores advancing to the state finals in Sedalia. Shannon Chidester came in first place and Dustin Dunning came in second. Both employees received certificates and Bass Pro gift certificates for finishing top two in the district.

In addition to the district qualifiers and the two state qualifiers, District 10 also recognized the top finishers from each superintendent's area. These top finishers included: Darren Thurston, from Wade Lacey's Area; Donald Treat, from Tim Shaffer's Area; Joseph Boggs, from all special crews; Thomas Brickhaus, from Randy Richardet's Area; Alan Hueckel, from Marvin Gillespie's Area; Douglas Clark, from Keith Hendershott's Area; Aaron Jones, from John Tutt's Area; Shannon Chidester, from Dave Kitchen's Area.

A traveling trophy was also an incentive for this year's training exercises. The travel trophy went to the superintendent's area with the highest overall percentage of scores. This year, the traveling trophy went to Wade Lacey's area, which includes the Poplar Bluff, Piedmont, Quilin, Naylor and Silva sheds.



Southeast District Engineer Mark Shelton, far left, congratulates the top finishers from the Southeast District. The two overall winners, Shannon Chidester and Dustin Dunning, advanced to the state finals.

### District Safety Committee Resolves Power Line Issues

What was once almost a weekly problem has now been resolved, thanks to the safety committee in the north area of the Southeast District.

After being encouraged to think innovatively, the safety committee began brainstorming for ways to help workers stop tearing down power lines in work zones. Many times, workers were forgetting about power lines as they drove tall equipment, causing lines to be torn down.

The safety committee decided that using green cones to mark locations with power lines was the solution. The green cones clearly mark areas with power lines and serve as a reminder to MoDOT workers when lines are present.

This idea became a new district policy, and since its implementation in March, there has not been any more lines torn down by MoDOT workers. Prior to this policy, during a one-week time period,

as many as three power lines were torn down.

“Not only does this solution increase work zone safety, but it also saves MoDOT money because repairs to power lines have no longer been necessary,” said District Safety and Health Manager Travis Fuller.

To recognize members of the north area safety committee for their solution to the “power line problem,” they were treated to a barbeque lunch on Sept. 5.

“While all of the committees are doing well, the north area of the Southeast District exceeded my expectations,” said Fuller. “We really want recognition to become a big part of the safety committee program.”

Other Southeast District safety committees are currently trying to develop new solutions to meet some of MoDOT's other concerns.

Some of the improvements they are working on include: better warning lights for vehicles that will be in the state right of way, improving the LP gas certification process, a safe and efficient tail gate removal system and better personal protection equipment for those who may be in harm's way. The north area safety committee also is working on furthering their idea of

the green cones by adding red stripes to them.

“We appreciate all of the employee participation with the safety committees,” said Fuller. “The committees are a way to give employees a voice in safety measures, which is important since safety is something that affects all MoDOT employees.”



The District Safety Committee in the northern area of District 10 were recently recognized for resolving safety issues in their portion of the district.

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# Connections

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# Survey Shows Buckling Up is Still Not Clicking with Some Missourians

by Sandra Hentges

Buckle up and arrive alive! The concept seems simple enough, but nearly one quarter of Missourians still are NOT making it click according to the 2008 statewide seat belt survey conducted in June, which showed that 75.8 percent of Missourians are wearing their seat belts.

Not wearing your seat belt gives you a one in 32 chance of being killed in a traffic crash. If you do buckle up, the odds of being killed are just one in 1,294. It's simple mathematics.

The reasons people site for not wearing their safety belt are as varied as Mis-

souri weather on any given day. Some of the most common excuses include:

1. I forgot
2. I didn't want to wrinkle my clothes
3. I'm not going far
4. It's uncomfortable
5. It's not cool
6. My car could catch on fire or go under water and I'd be trapped

"We've done an impressive job of combining education and enforcement campaigns to change behavior, and made a large number of engineering safety improvements under the Blueprint for

Safer Roads,"said Leanna Depue, Ph.D., director of the Division of Highway Safety.

"This last 24 percent is going to be a tough nut to crack," she said. "A primary seat belt law could do wonders to get more people to buckle up."

The benefits of a primary law speak for themselves:

- Save 90 lives and prevent 1,000 serious injuries each year.
- Save Missouri taxpayers \$231 million annually in costs associated with crashes.

- Provide a \$16.2 million one-time incentive grant for highway safety.

The survey also shows that the drivers of certain types of vehicles are more prone to not wearing their seat belts. Only 63.4 percent of pickup truck drivers in Missouri were shown to buckle up. Yet pickup trucks are twice as likely to rollover as cars, due to a higher center of gravity. With increased rollovers, the ejection rate for occupants of light trucks in a crash is nearly double the rate for occupants of passenger cars.

## Rodeo Prepares MoDOT

continued from page 1

### Statewide Rodeo Participants

|                    |                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>District 1</b>  | Tony Lager<br>Doug Crookshanks        |
| <b>District 2</b>  | Richard McClain<br>Jason Sears        |
| <b>District 3</b>  | Mark Sprock<br>Michael Ahrens         |
| <b>District 4</b>  | Eric Nold<br>Amanda Howe              |
| <b>District 5</b>  | Gary Jones*<br>Jason Lackman          |
| <b>District 6</b>  | Phil Krull<br>Ed Pyatt                |
| <b>District 7</b>  | Danny Bowling<br>Dennis Roethemeier** |
| <b>District 8</b>  | Wes Hawkins<br>Tony Dawson            |
| <b>District 9</b>  | Jake Keeney<br>Randall Ipock***       |
| <b>District 10</b> | Shannon Chidester<br>Dustin Dunning   |

\*Statewide Winner

\*\*Second Place

\*\*\*Third Place

do so at the statewide level. In addition, there were seven returning competitors from last year: Tony Lager, District 1; Richard McClain, District 2; Mark Sprock, District 3; Eric Nold, District 4; Jason Lackman, District 5; and Danny Bowling and Dennis Roethemeier, District 7.

The snow fight is an exhaustive process in terms of labor, equipment and resources. Last winter, MoDOT spent more than \$65 million to remove snow and ice. Maintenance crews put in approximately 780,000 hours, including 264,500 hours of overtime, to keep Missouri roads clear. Over the past five winters, MoDOT has spent an average of \$40 million.



Above: A Maintenance operator puts his skills to the test on the loader course.

Below: Judging the truck course is Tim Rice, Maintenance superintendent from Joplin.